

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

A comprehensive and integrated community involvement and outreach program is essential for the success of DDOT projects. Although community involvement and outreach programs are not “one-size-fits-all”, the following general approach can be used to tailor and customize an effective program for each project.

#### **12.1 Step 1: Planning the Community Involvement Program**

This initial step involves gathering information, researching the background and history on the project; identifying major issues and decisions; and determining the level of public interest. This step generally includes:

- Review or development of the project purpose and need statement.
- Review or development of project goals.
- Review any existing environmental impact studies.
- Review flood plain issues.
- Review any threatened or endangered species issues.
- Review of any development or redevelopment plans.
- Review status of other related District projects or studies.
- Review access management plan or goals.
- Review and understand transit objectives.
- Understand potential project impacts to adjoining property owners.
- Identify any known major issues.
- Understand key decision points (alignment, cross sections, ROW acquisition, alternative modes, access management, etc).
- Identify information to share with the public and input to receive from the public.
- DDOT to contact the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC). The ANC will set the time and place for a meeting for all to discuss the proposed project and provide input.
- Identify known project advocates and adversaries.
- Identify key groups to focus on with this program (staff, council, commission, stakeholders, partners, advocacy groups, media, public-at-large, etc).
- Assess the level of community interest in this project through the ANC.

#### **12.2 Step 2: Developing the Community Involvement Plan**

Based on the results of Step 1, develop a strategy with defined purpose and goals, identification of project work groups/team, review and select appropriate outreach tools, and an create an action plan. This step generally includes:

- Define purpose and goals for the community involvement and outreach program. Examples might include:
  - Identify public concerns and values
  - Provide open, credible process
  - Achieve stakeholder buy-in and consensus
  - Build public support
  - Provide adequate information for decision-makers
  - Public education and information
  - Identify and establish various work groups for the project. Examples might include:
    - Project Management Team (key staff and consultants)
    - Technical Working Group (key staff, consultants, developers, FHWA, US EPA, city council representative, WASA, WMATA, alternative modes/ADA advocates, etc)
  - Establish work group meeting location, time, and frequency
  - Review and select community involvement and outreach tools. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    - Project logo
    - Project fact sheet
    - Project photos, cross sections, renderings
    - Project status reports
    - Newsletters and meeting notices
    - Press releases
    - Cable access channel announcements
    - Information signs at the project termini point
    - Clipping service (of all news articles, press releases)
    - Web page (w/ link to District web site)
    - Stakeholder interviews
    - Focus groups
    - Suggestion/comment forms (hard copy and email)
    - Telephone hotline
    - Public meetings and open houses
    - Commission and Council work session presentations
    - Based on overall project schedule and decision points, establish a community involvement and outreach action plan complete with public meetings and locations, action items, assigned responsible parties, and target dates

### **12.3 Step 3: Implementing the Community Involvement Plan**

Based on the results of Steps 1 and 2, implement the action plan for community involvement and outreach with the approved modifications..

#### **12.4 Step 4: On-Going Evaluation and Modification of the Plan (as needed)**

Based on the dynamics of the process and issues that may surface as the project proceeds, the community involvement and outreach program must be evaluated on an ongoing basis and adjusted as needed.